

***Remarks***

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-13 are pending in the Application, with claims 1 and 8 being the independent claims. Claim 11 has been amended. The amendment adds no new matter to the Application. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

***Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102***

Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,239,863, entitled *Removable Cover for Protecting a Reticle, System Including and Method of Using the Same*, issued to Catey *et al.* on May 29, 2001. ("Catey Patent"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner has provided inadequate support for the above rejection. In the detailed action, the Examiner has copied verbatim various sections of the Catey Patent. In doing so, the Examiner notes that the Catey Patent "teaches a removable cover," but does not address whether the Catey Patent teaches the elements of the claims in the present invention. As a result, the Examiner has failed to provide an adequate basis to support the above rejection.

Moreover, claim 1 of the present application includes the element, "a mask barrier affixed to the front surface of the reticle, wherein said mask barrier surrounds the mask and has a height relative to the front surface of the reticle." The Catey Patent does not include this element. Specifically, the mask barrier in the present

application is affixed and not removed during lithographic exposure. Catey, on the other hand, teaches only a cover that is removed during lithographic exposure.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element set forth in the claim is found in a single prior art reference. MPEP § 2131. The Catey Patent does not include at least the above element of claim 1 that a mask barrier is affixed. Because this element is not taught or suggested by the Catey Patent, the Catey Patent cannot render unpatentable independent claim 1. Based on at least the reasons discussed above, claim 1 is allowable over the Catey Patent. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Because each dependent claim incorporates all of the elements of the independent claim from which it depends, as well as additional features, the above arguments apply a fortiori to the dependent claims. Thus, claims 2-7, which depend on claim 1, are also patentable over the Catey Patent. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-7 is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 of the present application includes the element of "a plurality of contact barriers each having a height relative to the front surface of the reticle wherein a contact barrier within said plurality of contact barriers is affixed to the front surface of the reticle between a contact point on a reticle and the mask." The Catey Patent does not include this element. The contact barriers in the present application are affixed and not removed during lithographic exposure. Catey, on the other hand, teaches only a cover that is removed during lithographic exposure.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element set forth in the claim is found in a single prior art reference. MPEP § 2131. The Catey Patent does not

include at least the element of claim 8 discussed above. Because this elements is not taught or suggested by the Catey Patent, the Catey Patent cannot render unpatentable independent claim 8. Based on at least this reason, claim 8 is allowable over the Catey Patent. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Because each dependent claim incorporates all of the elements of the independent claim from which it depends, as well as additional features, the above arguments apply a fortiori to the dependent claims. Thus, claims 9-13, which depend on claim 8, are also patentable over the Catey Patent. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 9-13 is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, claims 2-4 and 9-11 of the present invention teach the use of a flange that extends from a mask barrier or a contact barrier. The Catey Patent teaches the use of ridges which support a cover and are the only contact points on the reticle. Thus, it would be impossible for the Catey Patent to teach the use of flanges surrounding a barrier, because the Catey Patent does not teach, disclose or suggest a barrier surrounding a reticle or a contact point. Thus, in addition to the reasons above, for this additional reason claims 2-4 and 9-11 are also patentable over the Catey Patent.

### ***Conclusion***

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present

application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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